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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, we thank You for the gifts You generously give to humanity. We are grateful for the loveliness of Earth and sea and sky. Thank You for great music to hear and for great books of prose and poetry to read. Thank You for minds to think, for hands to labor, and for hearts to love.

Lord, we praise You for the abilities You have given our Senators and for their willingness to serve You and country. Teach them Your lessons; show them Your way. Make them Your instruments of a durable peace, just to all nations and hopeful for all humanity. As they work today, let their words, thoughts, and actions reflect the content of Your character.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 1, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following the remarks of the leaders, there will be a period of morning business for 90 minutes. The majority will control the first half and the Republicans will control the final half. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the Defense appropriations bill. Last night, cloture was filed on the committee-reported substitute amendment. As a result, the filing deadline for first-degree amendments is 1 p.m. today. Senators should expect rollcall votes to occur throughout the day as we work through amendments to this bill.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

McCHRYSTAL AMENDMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, as the Senate fulfills its constitutional

duty this week of providing for the common defense, it will also have an opportunity to fulfill its oversight responsibilities in the global war on terror and, more specifically, in the crucial theater of Afghanistan. Later today, the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator McCain, will offer an amendment to the Defense appropriations bill that calls on our top commander in Afghanistan, GEN Stanley McChrystal, and the Centcom Commander GEN David Petraeus, to come to Washington to explain to Congress and the American people why they believe the situation in Afghanistan is so perilous, what they believe is necessary for our success, and why.

There is recent precedent for this. Many Americans will recall that 2 years ago, in accordance with a requirement contained in another Defense appropriations bill, GEN David Petraeus came to Washington to explain what had gone wrong in Iraq and what he and the rest of our forces were doing to turn things around. By providing a sober assessment of the situation that cut through the political cross-currents of the moment, General Petraeus's testimony, along with that of Ambassador Ryan Crocker, focused the national debate. It left us newly confident in their ability to lead us in Iraq. And it set us on a path of progress that continues today.

No one is arguing that the two situations are identical. They are clearly not. But it is hard to deny the urgency of the assessment that General McChrystal sent to the White House in late August, parts of which have been made public. And it is impossible to ignore his depiction of a grave and deteriorating situation on the very soil where al-Qaida terrorists plotted the 9/11 attacks. General McChrystal's assessment of the worsening situation in Afghanistan should be of concern to all of us, particularly its account of a resurgent Taliban and a resilient al-

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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